



North Carolina Child Fatality Task Force 2021 Action Agenda

Legislative “support” items receive the highest level of support from the CFTF.

Legislative “endorse” items are led by others and endorsed by the CFTF.

“Administrative” items are currently non-legislative action items sought to be further examined or advanced by the CFTF.

Recommendations to strengthen the statewide Child Fatality Prevention System to increase the system’s ability to prevent child abuse, neglect, and death

LEGISLATIVE:

- Support legislation, agency action, and policy change to implement the following changes to the Child Fatality Prevention System (CFP System):
 - I. Implement centralized state-level staff with whole-system oversight in one location within the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) with the formation of a new cross-sector Fatality Review and Data Group and with child fatality staff in the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner (OCME) remaining in OCME.
 - II. Implement a centralized electronic data and information system that includes North Carolina joining 45 other states to participate in the National Child Death Review Case Reporting System.
 - III. Reduce the volume of team reviews by changing the types of deaths required to be reviewed by fatality review teams to be according to certain categories most likely to yield prevention opportunities.
 - IV. Reduce the number and types of teams performing fatality reviews by combining the functions of the four current types of teams into one with different procedures and required participants for different types of reviews (including intensive-type reviews of abuse or neglect-related deaths with state-level staff assistance), and giving teams the option to choose whether to be single or multi-county teams. DHHS should study and determine an effective framework for meeting the federal requirements for Citizen Review Panels and for reviewing active DSS cases without using all local review teams for these purposes.
 - V. Formalize the three committees of the Child Fatality Task Force (CFTF) with certain required committee members and expand the required CFTF report to address the whole CFP system with required report to be distributed to additional state leaders beyond the Governor and General Assembly.
- Support for maintaining current state funding for existing positions and operations that support Child Fatality Prevention System work, and for additional recurring funding to support this work pursuant to DHHS determinations to be made related to the most appropriate placement and staffing configuration for this central office as well as funding needs of local health departments to support CFP system work.
- Pursuant to DHHS determinations to be made related to launching a Fetal and Infant Mortality Review Program to inform state-level action related to the prevention of child deaths, support funding to enable implementation of the evidence-informed practice of FIMR as a pilot.

Recommendations to prevent youth suicide and firearm-related deaths and injuries to children

LEGISLATIVE:

- Support state funding for a new statewide firearm safety initiative, as recommended by the 2017 Firearm Safety Stakeholder group, that is focused on education and awareness surrounding firearm safe storage and distribution of free gun locks; funding to go to DHHS to appropriately engage a third-party organization to implement the initiative. (Two-year funding estimate is for \$155,700: \$86,500 for year one; \$69,200 for year two.)
- Appropriate recurring funding to increase the number of school social workers, school nurses, school counselors, and school psychologists to support the physical and mental health of students and to move North Carolina toward achieving nationally recommended ratios for these professional positions in schools.

ADMINISTRATIVE:

- Administrative support to explore and pursue possibilities for funding for a three-year lead suicide prevention coordinator position in North Carolina that would coordinate cross-agency efforts to carry out implementation of the 2015 NC Suicide Prevention Strategic Plan and determine a sustainability plan for ongoing statewide coordination for implementation of the Strategic Plan.
- Administrative support to follow implementation of new provisions in the NC Board of Education School Mental Health Policy that relate to strengthened school/community connections to address student mental health; information on implementation to be studied by the Intentional Death Prevention Committee prior to the 2022 legislative session.

Recommendations to prevent infant deaths

LEGISLATIVE:

- Support a state appropriation of \$85,000 in additional funding to expand the Safe Sleep NC program that works to prevent sleep-related infant deaths.
- Support legislative changes to strengthen North Carolina's Infant Safe Surrender law to make it more likely the law will be used in circumstances for which it was intended to protect a newborn infant at risk of abandonment or harm by making legislative changes to accomplish the following: 1) remove "any adult" from those designated to accept a surrendered infant; 2) provide information to a surrendering parent; 3) strengthen protection of a surrendering parent's identity; 4) incorporate steps to help ensure the law is only applied when criteria are met.
- Endorse additional Quitline NC funding of \$3 million [to prevent perinatal tobacco use].

Recommendations on workplace supports to strengthen child and family health, well-being, and economic stability

LEGISLATIVE:

- Endorse passage of a kin care and safe days bill that would guarantee all North Carolina workers the right to use their sick days (whether paid or job-protected unpaid) to care for a sick loved one, seek preventative care, or deal with the physical, mental, or legal impacts of domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking.
- Endorse legislation that would guarantee all North Carolina workers the right to reasonable pregnancy and lactation accommodations in the workplace.

Recommendations to strengthen education and awareness around child abuse and neglect reporting

LEGISLATIVE:

Legislation that would add child abuse and neglect reporting requirements to the topic list for required mental health training for school personnel in Session Law 2020-7.

ADMINISTRATIVE:

Administrative support for continued efforts to strengthen education and awareness surrounding child abuse and neglect reporting, including strengthening ongoing training for law enforcement that also supports an understanding of trauma and mental health; and training that is tailored for healthcare providers.

Recommendations and administrative efforts to prevent motor vehicle-related injuries and deaths to children

LEGISLATIVE:

Support legislation that would require ignition interlocks for all DWI offenders.

ADMINISTRATIVE:

- Administrative support to continue efforts to gather information on the potential for future legislation that allows for primary enforcement of all unrestrained back seat passengers with the intent to bring this item back for consideration by the Unintentional Death Prevention Committee prior to the 2022 legislative session, and Governor's Highway Safety Program to work with the Driver Education Advisory Committee to educate about the importance of back seat restraints.
- Administrative support for continuation of a child passenger safety study by the Occupant Protection Task Force to bring information back to the Unintentional Death Prevention Committee for consideration prior to the 2022 legislative session.

Recommendation to prevent harm to youth caused by tobacco and nicotine use

LEGISLATIVE:

Endorse at least \$7 million in funding for youth nicotine use prevention, including e-cigarettes.